

Trump, Clinton score big New York victories in race for White House

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Reuters

Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton scored sweeping victories in nominating contests in their home state of New York, and immediately cited them in arguing they are all but unstoppable as their respective parties' presidential nominees.

Trump's crushing defeat of Ted Cruz in yesterday's primary election tilted the energy in the Republican race back to the front-runner, just as Republican National Committee members begin meeting in Florida today to discuss their July convention, where the nominee will be chosen.

For the Democratic favorite, Clinton's more narrow victory over Bernie Sanders snapped a string of victories by the 74-year-old democratic socialist and gave her a much-needed lift with more tough fights ahead.

The eventual victors of the Democratic and the Republican nominating campaigns will face each other in November's general election.

Trump's win, celebrated to the tune of Frank Sinatra's 'New York, New York' at Trump Tower in Manhattan, marked a rebound from his Wisconsin defeat two weeks ago. It set him up for another big night on April 26, when Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Delaware, and Maryland will hold primaries.

With a campaign staff reboot and a more focused performance, Trump has sought to improve in recent weeks as a candidate. The tone of his victory speech was in keeping with a more measured style the often-brash billionaire has adopted.

"We don't have much of a race anymore based on what I'm seeing on television," Trump said as television networks projected a large margin of victory for him. "Senator Cruz is just about mathematically eliminated."

Trump, 69, predicted some "amazing weeks" ahead for his campaign.

Still, he has a long way to go to seal the nomination and begin trying to heal the wounds in his bitterly divided party.

Some fence-mending may happen when he sends campaign advisers to the RNC meeting starting in Hollywood, Florida, today.

Trump's haul of most of New York's 95 delegates moved him closer to the 1,237 needed to win the nomination outright.

Anything short of that will lead to a contested convention when Republicans hold their national conclave July 18-21 in Cleveland.

Cruz, a 45-year-old US senator from Texas, came in third in New York and gave his primary night speech in Philadelphia, where he was already focused on running in Pennsylvania. He called on Republicans to unite around his candidacy.

Ohio Governor John Kasich, 63, a long-shot candidate, is seeking to use his second-place showing in New York as proof he is emerging as Trump's central challenger in the states that come up next on the calendar

Clinton (pix), a former US senator from New York, former secretary of state and former first lady, got nowhere near the knockout punch she needed to finally put Sanders away.

But the broad smile on her face as she gave her victory speech spoke volumes about how important New York was to her bid to become the first female US president.

"Today you proved once again there's no place like home," Clinton said. "This one was personal."

The race for the Democratic nomination, she said, is now in "the home stretch, and victory is in sight."

Clinton, 68, was to campaign in Philadelphia today. Sanders flew home to Vermont to take a day off the campaign trail.

Nationally, the race for the nominations has tightened recently for both parties, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll released yesterday.

Clinton and Sanders are tied among Democrats, with each drawing about 47 percent support in the national poll. At the beginning of the year, Clinton led Sanders by nearly a 2-to-1 margin; Sanders has closed that gap over the past few months.

Among Republicans, Trump leads with 44 percent support, compared with 33 percent for Cruz and 16 percent for Kasich.

The April 15-19 poll surveyed 719 Democrats and 593 Republicans. It has a credibility interval of 4.7 percentage points.

- Reuters